

## **FIRST 5 MODOC**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **First 5 Modoc Invests \$89,000 to Retain and Reward Child Care Professionals**

*More than 70 workers rewarded for improving their education  
and remaining in the field*

**(Alturas)** – Child care workers in Modoc County have seen their efforts to improve their education and provide stable, quality care rewarded by a pay supplement from First 5 Modoc, formerly known as the Modoc County Children and Families Commission. The first-ever pay incentives for more than 70 child care providers, totaling more than \$89,000, were provided through the CARES (Compensation and Retention Encourage Stability) program and are expected to encourage workers to stay in the field while continuing their education. Child care experts have cited consistency in staffing as an important factor in quality child care programs.

“Providing quality child care for the young children of Modoc County will help them reach their greatest potential in school and in life,” said Mike Dunn, Commission chair and Modoc County Supervisor. “The CARES program allows us to reward child care providers who sometimes sacrifice higher paying positions so that they may dedicate themselves to working with children.”

According to Sarah Cook, CARES coordinator with the Modoc Child Care Council, stipends averaged about \$1,400 per applicant depending on experience, education and training. Modoc County has four state preschools, two Early Head Start programs, one general center based child care provider and one faith based provider, and many licensed exempt providers, all of which have participants in the CARES program.

**(more)**

“We are very encouraged by the participation levels of this first year and already have more than 72 qualified applicants for next year,” said Cook. “It is wonderful to see so many providers taking classes whether in school or on the Internet. Increasing the quality of care for our youngest children will have a positive effect on their development, and working parents can rest assured that they’re leaving their children in the hands of well-trained professionals.”

The California CARES legislation, AB 212, which passed in 2000, provides pay stipends for child care workers in publicly subsidized programs. Modoc CARES makes stipends available for the first time to local providers in privately funded child care settings.

Artia Kemper has been caring for children since 1992 but it wasn’t until her participation in the CARES program that she was able to share ideas and challenges with others in her field. She plans to continue caring for young children in Modoc County in part because the stipend enables her to pay for her education and invest more money into her child care business.

“Thanks to this money, I’m able to take college classes in child development and improve my ability to communicate with parents and providers about the needs of children,” said Kemper.

First 5 Modoc was established after voters passed Proposition 10 in November 1998, placing a 50 cent-per-pack tax on cigarettes to fund education, health, child care and other programs for expectant parents and children ages 0 to 5. First 5 Modoc receives approximately \$200,000 per year for programs that meet local needs.

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